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AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2003

HEARINGS

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES
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AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2003

Thursday, February 28, 2002.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

WITNESSES

JOSEPH J. JEN, UNDER SECRETARY, RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS
ED KNIPLING, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
COLIEN HEFFERAN, ADMINISTRATOR, COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE
SUSAN OFFUTT, ADMINISTRATOR, ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
R. RONALD BOSECKER, ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
STEPHEN B. DEWHURST, BUDGET OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Opening Remarks

Mr. Bonilla. The subcommittee will come to order this morning. Ms. Kaptur, I note, is already enjoying the goodie bag that is provided by ARS, many of the products that are a direct result of the research that is done by ARS. We appreciate the bag being provided this morning to every member. They are all sitting behind the dais here and we appreciate that.

Today we are delighted to have before us Dr. Joseph Jen, the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics. Dr. Jen, we are happy to have you here for the first time, and we welcome your testimony today as well as that of your associates who administer the four agencies that are under your purview.

But before we begin, I would like to recognize my colleague, Ms. Kaptur. She is trying to get around the goodie bag I think.

Ms. Kaptur. I just want to thank everyone from the Department for being here today, all those responsible for the research side of the equation. There could be no more pivotal part of the Department than those activities that you represent. You really represent the future. And so I look forward to your testimony, and we thank you for your service to our country, and really the people of the world.

Ray and I were talking when I walked in about some meetings that we had yesterday with representatives from the Nation of Lebanon. And we spent the entire time talking about research and the future, and the challenges that that country faces with water use and with plant life. And I just kept thinking about the work that all of you do, largely unrecognized for the most part, and thank you so very much for being with us today.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Ms. Kaptur.

Before we proceed, I would also like to acknowledge Mr. LaHood, who is here today. He is probably the best-known face on television of almost any member in the House, because he is always chosen to preside over the House floor during the very contentious debates we consistently have. So whether a bill is a campaign finance reform, or even a broadband bill that we debated on the floor yesterday, the Speaker calls on Mr. LaHood to do duty in the Speaker's chair. He spends long hours there, and sometimes has to make tough choices as to whether or not to be here or in the Speaker's chair. I wish we could clone you, Mr. LaHood so we could put you in two or three spots at once. We are proud of the work you do, and we missed you, but we welcome you back today.

Mr. LaHood. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Mr. Jen, you may proceed with your opening statement. We have put your entire written statement into the record.

Mr. Jen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Congresswoman Kaptur.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is my pleasure to appear before you for the first time to discuss the fiscal year 2003 budget for the Research, Education and Economics mission area agencies.

Introduction of Witnesses

I am accompanied by the administrators of the four mission area agencies, Dr. Ed Knipling, Acting Administrator of ARS; Dr. Colien Hefferan, Administrator of CSREES; Dr. Susan Offutt, Administrator of ERS; and Mr. Bosecker, Administrator of NASS. Also present is Mr. Steve Dewhurst, Director of the Budget Office of the Department. Each administrator has submitted written testimony for the record.

Opening Statement

Given today's tight budget constraints, driven significantly by the need to shore up our homeland security and current economic situations, the REE budget that we are discussing reflects a recognition of the critical role of our REE's research, education, economics and statistical programs in solving the problems facing our Nation's agriculture and food systems. We appreciate the support received from Congress in our appropriation for fiscal year 2002. The President's fiscal year 2003 budget proposes $2.3 billion for the four REE agencies.

REE's four agencies have a proud history over many decades of finding solutions to the challenges confronting farmers, ranchers and consumers. The work of these agencies has resulted in a high return on Federal investment, thus enabling our Nation to enjoy a plentiful, affordable and safe food supply. For more than 100 years science has been the foundation of American agriculture. During the past century research investment and scientific advances have fueled the tremendous rate of productivity growth in the American agriculture sector. America's public investment in agricultural research is a major reason the percentage of household income we spend on food has dropped from 20.5 percent in 1950 to 10.2 percent in the year of 2000.

However, without continued gains in agricultural science, the United States cannot continue to provide affordable, safe and nutritious food to American consumers and the world population. Without continued scientific progress, we also cannot continue to compete effectively in a global marketplace, nor can we develop practices that mitigate the effects of agriculture on the environment.

The remarkable success enjoyed by the agriculture sector and food systems, and the resultant benefits that have accrued to the Nation depend heavily on our having a reservoir of scientific knowledge. That reservoir is filled through conducting basic fundamental research. Applied mission-oriented research and technology development thendraw on that knowledge reservoir to address pressing problems faced by the agricultural sector and the society. If we are to continue the successes of the past, we must continue to replenish the basic fundamental knowledge reservoir.

BALANCED RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

USDA is committed to achieve a balanced agricultural research portfolio including an appropriate blend of basic fundamental research and applied mission-oriented research. The proposed REE budget provides such a balance.

Increases in research focus on basic fundamental science to replenish the knowledge reservoir. Increases in applied mission-oriented research draw on the knowledge in the reservoir to develop solutions to pressing problems in agriculture. For these reasons the fiscal year 2003 budget proposes an increase to $240 million for the National Research Initiative, NRI, a program authorized in 1991 legislation at 500 million annually. Competitive grants such as NRI, open to all the research community, provide the most effective mechanism for attracting the best minds in the Nation to conduct research in agriculture and food systems.

Agricultural genome research is another program receiving an increase in the President's budget. We are only at the dawn of the age of biotechnology. However, the promises are well established. The science is solid, and the results to reduce production inputs and increase yield are clear. Just around the corner we see function of food or food products with beneficial health properties emerging. However, harvesting the promises of this powerful technology depends on having a fundamental understanding of the genetic makeups of plants, animals and microbes. The sequencing of genomes and identifying and mapping genes that influence resistance, reproduction, nutrition and other economically important trades, are all part of this new science. In collaboration with other Federal agencies, USDA is currently participating in and supporting the National Plant Genome Initiative and the Microbe Project. We have also been asked by the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to lead in the coordination of research activity related to domestic animal genomes.

The present budget also proposes increases in research for exotic and emerging plants and animal disease and pests. For example, citrus canker threatens Florida citrus industry, and Pierce's disease threatens California vineyards. In addition, the recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom and the resultant destruction of huge numbers of animals, resulted in immense economic losses and international trade embargoes for the United Kingdom. The budget includes an increase in exotic and emerging diseases and pests of $13 million in the ARS base program and $5 million in biosecurity research. Funding will support the development of new methods to rapidly and accurately detect and identify pathogens, as well as research to pursue long-term solutions for integrated control strategies.

The President's budget also reflects an increase in biobased products and bioenergy research. This research focuses on solving multiple national problems through finding new uses and new market for value-added agricultural products such as biofuels to improve our Nation's energy security.

EDUCATION

Increases in the budget supporting the research component of REE are complemented with increases in education, a second critical function of REE. U.S. agriculture has entered an era characterized by global competitiveness, food distribution inequities, environmental concerns and promising technologies.

Grappling with these issues require a reliable supply of highly-qualified scientists and other skilled professionals working to advance the frontier of knowledge and technology in agriculture and food systems. The President's budget provides an increase of $2.7 million in three higher education programs, the Institution Challenge Grant, the Graduate Fellowship Grant and international grants to land grant institutions.

STATISTICS AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Thirdly, statistical and economical analysis also receive increases in the President's budget proposal. Comprehensive agricultural statistics and an understanding of agricultural markets and the evolving farm sector are critical ingredients for crafting informed farm policy and maintaining our competitive position in the global economy. A core source of information for gaining this understanding is derived from the Agricultural Research Management Survey known as ARMS. This survey is jointly sponsored by NASS and ERS. Conducted annually, ARMS is the primary source of information about the financial condition, production practices, use of resources and household economic well-being of American farmers. Data from ARMS form the foundation of research analysis, making it possible to answer key questions from Congress, administration officials, USDA and other decision makers about the differential impact of alternative policies and programs across farm sector.

As Secretary Veneman has often stated, ``USDA's policy decisions must be based on sound science.'' This science base depends upon how effectively the various Federal research partners collaborate with each other. The challenges in our food and fiber system today are complex and often require collaboration among USDA agencies and other Federal departments. REE is making that collaboration happen, working with NASA on precision agriculture, with NSF on plant genome research, with DOE on microbial genome research, and with DOD and DOE on biobased products and bioenergy. We are also collaborating with the FDA and the CDC on food safety research, with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative on trade negotiations, and with EPA on implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996.

In summary, I want to reiterate that given an overall tight budget, the REE agencies' budget presents a balance portfolio, reflecting a commitment to replenish our knowledge reservoir of basic fundamental science by supporting applied mission-oriented research to address immediate problems. The budget also provides new funding in education, economic and statistical analysis. It also reflects an understanding that REE programs are essential not only to solve the problems American agriculture and our producers face today, but also to address the emerging problems of tomorrow and expand opportunities for consumers. With continued investment in agricultural research, we will be ready to meet those future problems and take advantage of new opportunities presented by cutting edge science and technology. Thank you.

[The information follows:]

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

CONGRESSIONALLY-INITIATED RESEARCH

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Dr. Jen. Dr. Jen, I want to make a point at the beginning of this hearing that I feel is shared by all the members of the subcommittee. All the members who serve on this subcommittee do so with great enthusiasm, and it is a privilege to be on this subcommittee. It is one assignment that, when all of us began serving, whatever year it was, worked real hard to get. There are many other subcommittees that are out there for consideration for those of us who are on the full Appropriations Committee. This assignment is extremely important to those of us who are sitting on this subcommittee, whether we care about agriculture production, domestic or international feeding programs, marketing, trade, or economics. All of those issues are important to us, but the sharpest focus is on serving the people that we represent back home, the people who sent us here, by being a strong voice for those constituents.

The members of our subcommittee cover a broad range in this country as you look across the room. Just to name a few of the States that are represented here, Texas, of course, New York, Georgia, Washington, Iowa, Missouri, Virginia, Illinois, Ohio, Connecticut, California, Florida, Wisconsin. Our Vice Chairman, Mr. Latham from Iowa, is greatly concerned about agriculture, but he does not have a lot of cotton in his part of his district, as I do in Texas. Our ranking member, Ms. Kaptur, has swine production in her area. I do not have that in my area, but we do have a lot of wool and mohair producers. I say that because it just gives you an example of the diversity and the different interests that we are all concerned about.

It is a big country. My point is that we have been sent here to work on the problems that our constituents bring to our attention, and not to put too much of a fine point on it. If we do not work on these problems, Dr. Jen, they are not going to send us back every two years. That is what makes our system better than a centrally-planned economy, because we are able to look after the particular issues in our area.

Once again the budget proposes to virtually eliminate congressionally-initiated research for which we have appropriated funds in the past. I am sure we will be talking about that a lot this morning. The budget also proposes to redirect these resources in order to increase work that is directed entirely by the Executive Branch, such as the proposal to double the National Research Initiative.

I would just point out that such proposals might have some chance of success if it were not for the fact that they are financed by terminating congressionally-initiated projects. The budget for ARS proposes to cut over $89 million from congressionally-designated funding. The budget for CSREES proposes a cut of $136 million from congressionally-designated funding. This is not just trimming around the edges. This is a whole scale elimination of work that we have deemed important on this subcommittee.

Dr. Jen, in my view, the budget proposes a big shift in how we decide to spend our research dollars. I think that we know your views, and some of us have shared our views even before this hearing with you and your staff. I would simply state that I do not think our subcommittee is going to stop doing what we were sent here to do.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY OVER FEDERAL EXPENDITURES

And the closing point that I want to make about this is to reference the letter that I am sure you saw that was sent by our Chairman of the full Committee, Bill Young, on February 6th, to Mitch Daniels, Director of OMB. I am not going to read the whole letter, but citing the Constitution, the Chairman pointed out and, I quote: ``My Committee will vigorously defend our constitutional authority over Federal expenditures.'' Article I, Section 9, Clause 7 states: ``No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in consequence of appropriations made by law.''

This leaves no ambiguity, as Mr. Young pointed out. I am sure that some of the views that I just stated are shared by many other members of the subcommittee.

And with that, I will yield to Ms. Kaptur.

Ms. Kaptur. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to support you in your very clear statement, and quite frankly, to say that on the research front, our region of Ohio got absolutely no attention from USDA over the years, even though we are at the cutting edge of a great deal of research relating to plant genetics. We had no research station from USDA, even though we were at the eastern end of the Corn Belt, and we had every major grain company. We did have the presence of the Farm Service Agency in different forms over the years, but I would just have to say that our part of America, for the most part, was ignored.

Now, the eastern part of Ohio had a presence, and some of the research scientists there paid a tad of attention to what was happening in our region, but I guess, in support of the Chairman's point, USDA really needs to wed its, what I call process knowledge, to the particularized knowledge that exists in various communities across this country. And I think in that way we actually build a much stronger and realistic program. And so the Chairman has my full support, as does the Chairman of the full Committee on is statement.

USDA RESEARCH FUNDING

Now, I wanted to turn immediately to the overall figures for the research budget, the cumulative dollars that you have available. As I read the numbers, as important as your work is, the budget actually, for the Agricultural Research Service, for example, has a $10.8 million cut as I look at totals and so forth. If I look at what we have done with the National Science Foundation over the last few years, we as a country, and I supported this, have voted to double the National Science Foundation budget. If we look at the National Institutes of Health in terms of research, we have tripled the amount of research dollars going into those accounts. And the path-breaking work that you need to do in plant genetics, for example, and biotech, the request that is being made of this committee in no way reflects the importance of your work, and in fact it is a flat line or regressive budget in terms of research as I look at it.

So, Dr. Jen, I am concerned about the way agricultural research is being treated in the context of the President's budget. My first question to you is, is this the budget that you submitted as a department, to the Office of Management and Budget for research?

Mr. Jen. Congresswoman Kaptur, I think you actually capture the essence of the problem of USDA's research budget in what you just stated, in that we just do not have enough funds to cover all the research that needs to be done, whether it is basic research, whether it is applied research which is mission oriented, and all that. So we are being forced into choosing between various good programs.

Given that, Mr. Chairman, I do understand your concern andcertainly every year the administration has taken the position of favoring competitive grants over some of the research special grants. But I do want to state that the four REE agencies have always carried out the final budget appropriated by the Congress with diligence and efficiency, and we are ready to administer all types of research, education, economic programs as directed.

I came on board in July of last year, so I did not know the initial budget process for this coming year, but it is my understanding that agencies did not propose cutting all these programs.

COMPARATIVE FUNDING FOR RESEARCH

Ms. Kaptur. Dr. Hefferan or Dr. Knipling, do you wish to comment on the comparison of the flat line or regressive research budget for USDA compared to NIH and NSF, or any other research being conducted by the Government of the United States?

Dr. Knipling. Well, we certainly share that concern. Up until this proposed budget we have enjoyed modest growth in our Agricultural Research Service budget and other segments of the Department as well. For example, this fiscal year our budget is about 10 percent over the amount last year. That is not quite in the same league as those other agencies, and we would aspire to be at that level. As you point out, the proposed budget for next year is essentially flat. That $10 million number you cited represents about a 1 percent decrease overall.

Ms. Kaptur. For the cumulative research that you will all do together on behalf of the Department, what is the total? What is the total budget figure? Maybe Mr. Dewhurst could give me that.

Mr. Dewhurst. It is $2.3 billion.

Ms. Kaptur. It is $2.3 billion. And as you look at the comparison of the increases at NIH and NSF over the years, you have not experienced that kind of increase at Agriculture, double or triple.

Mr. Dewhurst. No. The facts speak for themselves. You are absolutely correct. Our research has not grown at the rate those other organizations have grown.

Ms. Kaptur. I think that is really important to put on the record. Dr. Jen, I listened to you carefully, and you talked about the bioterrorism and the increase of $5 million, $5 million to fund animal and plant research in support of biosecurity? Now, $5 million is a lot of money to any family in my district, but I have to say in terms of meeting national need, I call that an embarrassment. So when I look at the dollars that we will be spending related to terrorism, it just seems to me that this is not a realistic request.

PLANT GENOMICS RESEARCH

I know that my time is probably up, but very quickly, if I wanted to get a special briefing for our committee on the issue of plant genomics and the ongoing research, or just genomics at USDA, where in the country is the most concentrated set of researchers and information available? Where would I take this committee? Where would we go, or where would we invite people in from in order to brief us on that? I just do not think you get enough publicity for the work that you are doing. Who would do that for us?

Mr. Jen. The plant genome research is very diverse. It is being carried out at many places, both in ARS labs as well as a lot of land grant institutions which are funded through CSREES. I would say that if you want to just have one location to have a briefing, probably Washington, DC is the best to bring people to do that. And if there are specific segments of the program you are interested in, then we can direct you to specific locations.

Ms. Kaptur. I just see so much of the future of our country relates to plant genetics, whether it is stream bed cleanup and water filtration, or whether it is bioenergy production, which I will ask about in subsequent questions. As I look at these walls, we do not say that to the public that comes in here, and I think we need to help tell your story better. NASA does a much better job of telling it story than USDA does on research in this really incredibly exciting area. I would just ask for your working with us as a subcommittee, and I just offer the opportunity for interested members to learn about the research that is ongoing in this area. We need to inform ourselves better.

Mr. Jen. I will be very happy to organize a briefing session for you because I do serve as the co-chair of the National Plant Genome Initiative, together with NSF. And I do have a background in plant technology myself. So I will be more than happy to organize a session if you have time for it.

Ms. Kaptur. Thank you, doctor. We will bring the lunches. [Laughter.]

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you very much.

Mr. LaHood.

Mr. LaHood. Thank you very much, all of you, for being here.

And, Dr. Jen I wonder if you have ever visited the research lab in Peoria?

Mr. Jen. I must say that I have not yet.

Mr. LaHood. Well, I want to extend an invitation to you. I see where you actually studied in Carbondale, and at Southern Illinois University, and have a degree from there. And we are a long way away from Carbondale, but you would certainly be welcome in Peoria. We have one of the four premiere Ag. research labs in our community, and you folks have really taken care of our Ag. lab over the last several years with the renovation that is going on. We are really moving the lab into the 21st century. It was built over 50 years ago, but it is being modernized to really come into the 21st century, so I hope you will take an opportunity sometime to come to Peoria and visit it. What you will find there, as I am sure you know, many highly-professional people who contribute an awful lot to the future of agriculture.

What I have been saying to people in my district is that research is one of the two or three keys to getting out of the recession that we are in, and I am distressed as the Chairman has indicated, about the zeroing out of a program there called BRDC, which is a program--that does not cost a lot of money; it is only a couple of million dollars--but they have worked with the private sector in trying to find more and better uses for corn and beans, and then develop those and let the private sector take them. They develop patents and really expand what we can do make markets for our corn and beans, and the residue from those.

And I do not know that that was done by you, but it has been zeroed out and it is a very, very important program, and it has contributed mightily to our ability to really expand the use of some things that we have not been able to do because of lack of exports.

And so in any event, I want to make that point aboutBRDC. I hope we can restore the funding for that. It is a marvelous program. But I also want to compliment you and your folks for really putting a lot of emphasis on our Ag. lab, on renovating it, on bringing it into the 21st century, and extend an invitation to you to come to Peoria and see the great work that goes on there.

That is all I have, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Jen, thank you.

Mr. Jen. I will make sure that I do visit very soon. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. LaHood.

Mr. Boyd.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Jen, other panelists, welcome. Just reading the biographical sketches, I know every one of you has a long history of service to this country in agriculture, mostly with an agricultural background. The members of this committee heard me say before that I believe very strongly the reason we are the best agricultural production company in the world is because we are the best at research and we stay ahead of the curve. I think in the last few years we have not kept the pedal to the metal, so to speak, and I think it is time that we turn that around. We just have to.

Citrus Canker

This may surprise you, but I might want to talk about Florida and citrus. You know, we have a $9 billion industry down there that is in serious, serious jeopardy. You referred to it in your spoken remarks. My question to you is, from your perspective, how are we focusing our research efforts to find solutions to the citrus canker problem? We know they are not right around the corner, but can we find solutions long-term and are we making the effort, the financial commitment, and resource commitments, to find those solutions?

Dr. Jen. Congressman Boyd, I was at Florida twice the last 2 months. In relation to the citrus canker, I had a brief discussion with the citrus department, Florida Department of Agriculture research people, on how to combine our effort to find a solution. But I think in terms of the technical details, I am going to have to defer to Dr. Knipling, who might know a little more about it.

Dr. Knipling. Well, we agree with you. Citrus canker is just one of many plagues, as you know. With respect to the canker problem in South Florida, at this point it is a regulatory issue, of course, but ARS is providing technical advice. We have studied the epidemiology of the disease of some of our research as the science basis for some of the regulatory policy, and certainly that has been our present recent focus on detection, epidemiology, sampling methodology, but for the long term breeding resistance in citrus varieties is the solution.

Mr. Boyd. Let me be a little more specific. In this budget you are presenting here today, what do we have which specifically focuses on this issue?

Mr. Knipling. The base program at Fort Pierce, and this is where this effort is centered for citrus canker, is fairly modest. I would say about $500,000 per year. We have considerable more in some of the other citrus diseases.

Mr. Boyd. I thank you. And I want to say that I agree with you, it is fairly modest. And we tried, this committee, back to what the Chairman said in his opening statement, is tried to, through the expertise on this committee, has tried to focus on some of these problems nationally, and that is going to be the issue as we develop this budget, and the differences that--you seem to have left out some of those programs that we had funded in the past, and we just want to have a healthy discussion with you about those.

Mr. Jen. Congressman Boyd, if I could introduce Colien Hefferan, she could add a little bit on the subject.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you.

Dr. Hefferan. One of the primary justifications for the large increase in the National Research Initiative focuses on both plant and animal disease. The University of Florida has been one of our most successful applicants to the National Research Initiative, and currently has a number of plant disease projects that focus not only on citrus canker, but other diseases of citrus, as well as related issues.

We have depended on the collaboration between the Agricultural Research Service, the university researchers and the extension programs to help with the real challenge in South Florida now, and of course the extension base programs provide a lot of effort related to citrus canker. I think our primary increases in 2003 for the National Research Initiative would focus so much effort on both animal and plant disease, that the opportunity for the Florida researchers, opportunity which they have been very successful in capitalizing on, would be very, very good.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you. And Mr. Chairman, if I might, with one final comment. I think we have 7 ARS stations in Florida. Mr. Knipling, is that right?

Dr. Knipling. That is correct, yes.

Mr. Boyd. I have not had a chance to visit them all, but I am making that effort to see them, and I will be, next month, in March, visiting at least 3. I know you got some infrastructure facility issues, and I want to be helpful to you on that also. Thank you.

Mr. Knipling. I might just add that there is an 8th one located at Tallahassee at Florida A&M, which is connected to the Gainesville program.

Mr. Boyd. Right. A brand new very unique cooperative relationship with an 1890s land grant college.

Mr. Knipling. That is correct.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you for making that happen.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Boyd.

Mr. LaHood. Mr. Chairman, could I insert my statement about BRDC into the record?

Mr. Bonilla. Absolutely. Thank you, Mr. LaHood.

[The information follows:]

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

Mr. Bonilla. Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Walsh. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to associate myself with your remarks and the remarks of the ranking member, Ms. Kaptur, regarding the administration's approach to member priorities. I do not think it is helpful. I have experienced that in my bill also. And as I said to Mr. Daniels last year, the Executive Branch certainly has their priorities. We respect those, but they need to respect ours also.

HACCP

I have a question. I believe it would be for Dr. Offutt, regarding HACCP and the study that has been done recently. We went through a very difficult exercise several years ago in trying to improve the quality of meat inspection at the plants throughout the country, and there was a gradual phasing in of the HACCP standards from large plants all the way down to the smaller ones. And I understand that your department has done a study, and I wondered if you could share or give us a synopsis of the report and how that is working out.

Dr. Offutt. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Walsh. We are indeed looking at the question of the experience of adoption of HACCP across plant size. The concern, of course, is that if there are large fixed costs associated with the institution of the system, that that is a relative disadvantage to the smaller plants. We are currently in data collection on that, actually trying to build the empirical picture that will allow us to determine whether or not there are differential degrees of adoption, costs of adoption, but we do believe that there are some differences, and we expect to have a better idea of what they are and the extent of difference with larger plants probably in the next 6 to 8 months.

Mr. Walsh. What is your impression, if you could give us generally, of the success of the qualitative improvement of meat inspection in the country due to the implementation of HACCP?

Ms. Offutt. I do not know that I am qualified to give a comprehensive answer.

Mr. Walsh. Is anyone in the panel qualified to do that?

Dr. Jen. I think that is mainly in the FSIS, in the mission area of food safety, and they would be able to answer.

Mr. Walsh. Well, then I will pursue that with them.

Dr. Offutt. But I would say that our part of this business is to try to track the human health costs and benefits of adoption of these measures. And while there may be benefits in the industry that we have not completely categorized, the incidence of foodborne disease associated with meat products does seem to have declined. Now, we would like to know more to establish a firm causal relationship, but certainly the direction of change in the reduction in disease is the way we would like to see it.

HOMELAND AND SECURITY

Mr. Walsh. Thank you. There has been an emphasis certainly in the country on biosecurity and counter-terrorism and planning for these events that we just experienced or trying to plan for these events. What type of improvements are we providing to make our laboratories safer and to ensure that they have the capability to respond to new and emerging threats, Plum Island, for example, in Long Island?

Dr. Jen. Congressman Walsh, right after the 9-11 incident, the Department immediately formed a Homeland Security Council, which is led by Deputy Secretary Jim Moseley. The Department not only reviewed the safety and security issues of our facility ourselves, but also hired outside consultants that specialize in security management to assist us, to develop more guidelines and physical improvements. Many of those improvements have already been implemented, and more are being added on a daily basis at this point.

Mr. Walsh. Thank you, sir.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Farr.

Mr. Farr. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have the feelings that many of the members of this Committee have, particularly about the benefit of your service in the Department and to this Nation. I think the only way America is going to stay on the cutting edge is to stay smarter, and the way you stay smarter is to stay in research. But as I look over the mandates of the Department, it is essentially mandates to develop new knowledge and to expand knowledge. And if you just limit that to the formula grants that have been set in law, I do not think that is necessarily based on that criteria. Those formulas were devised a long time ago for land grant colleges and not on basis of competition or basis of what those colleges are doing to improve new knowledge or expand knowledge.

The competitive grants, I am very interested in those. I think that is the way to go. But I also think that when you cut congressional earmarks, you are cutting off the public access, the process that we have in America, where it is the taxpayers' money and we are elected by those taxpayers to try to make it. And here is why I get concerned, because I do not see in those competitive dollars that the new stuff is getting addressed, to develop the new knowledge, particularly in minor crops. They do not have the lobbying firms. They do not have even the research university spending a lot of time on them. I happen to represent an area that grows a lot of those minor crops. We grow lettuce. We grow 85 crops in my county. There is not another state that grows 85 crops. We produce $2\1/2\ billion in agricultural sales in Monterey County alone, without any subsidies. There are no Federal water subsidies. There are no crop support subsidies. There is nothing. This is free market enterprise. This is the stuff we really want to get into, and we are doing with all the environmental regulations and all the land use regulations that California and local governments put on them, and we are still being able to--the only area where we need help is in research. And those crops are not getting that kind of research because of all this other stuff.

So when a legislator comes in here and earmarks some of these things and say, ``Let us pay attention to this.'' I mean I paid attention when it got elected 10 years ago to the methyl bromide issue. We had a big problem with methyl bromide, and we have allocated to your Department over $100 million in the last 10 years for methyl bromide research. And you know where it went? To structural methyl bromide, to tending houses. It did not get down into the fields where the problems with methyl bromide are.

And so I have sort of a love-hate relationship with these research dollars of not really getting to the spot where they need to be done. So one question I have is that if I look at the West, there are $9 million in proposed project terminations in California alone. You look at the Pacific West region, I think we take a disproportionate hit in administration's cuts for fiscal year 2003. 20 percent ofthe proposed decreases come from 8 western states, and heavily on research.

You know, we have issues like Pierce's disease, and I am glad you mentioned that in your statement. Thank you. It is a big industry, the wine-viticulture industry in California. And yet can you explain to me why there is a $2.5 million proposed termination of the Pierce's disease research? Why is the Western Regional Research Center at Albany slated for terminations of about $5.3 million in a highly productive processed foods research unit? And even my little district office of research, I notice through the years has been going down, down, down, and yet the production and the interest in specialty crops is going up, up, up.

So I think that you are hearing from this committee that the leather hits the road in research, and we really want to see that there is more of an appropriate response to the needs out there by the farmers who are trying to stay on the cutting edge and not live off the subsidies of American taxpayers to produce their product and compete with the world economy. And frankly, these emerging countries and these trade agreements, what are they going to do, these countries? The value-added crops that they can produce are going to be specialty crops. They are not going to compete with us in wheat and corn. They are going to compete with us in strawberries and apples and things that a lot of members in this committee have growing in their districts.

So I plead with you to explain why these cuts are hitting those crops that are most essential to our trade competition, and to keeping agriculture a free market?

REDUCTION IN ARS PROGRAMS

Dr. Jen. Congressman Farr, I am from California, so therefore I am very sympathetic with all of the things that you said, and it is of the same concern. Particularly I have served on the Advisory Board of the California Department of Food and Agriculture for a number of years.

Mr. Farr. I know that, and I know your reputation, and it is a great reputation. But both you and the Secretary are from California, and we in California sort of expect a little bit more leadership. [Laughter.]

Dr. Jen. In terms of the closing or the reduction in some programs is concerned, in the ARS side, really, I think ARS has over 100 research locations, over 1,000 research programs around the country, and there are many of them that have some duplications in a sense. When we were given the mandate of having to look into the reduction of the ARS budget, that those areas were looked at very hard. The decisions were based really on the recommendations in a particular report, the report of the Strategic Planning Task Force on USDA research facilities, mandated by the 1996 Farm Bill. And almost all the closings, reductions, or transfers of the program can be traced back to direct recommendations from that particular report.

Am I right, Dr. Knipling?

Dr. Knipling. That is correct.

Mr. Farr. It does not explain though the value of the congressional earmarks that really go to these minor crops that otherwise are not getting attention. I do not think if we had not pushed for organic, that you would be out there putting money in organic, and it is one of the fastest-growing developing industries in the country, and producing millions of dollars in sales out of our counties, and actually, a lot of traditional agriculture is moving to organic because it is the best management practice.

So I think you have got to keep this research up where the concerns are.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Farr.

Ms. Emerson.

AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

Mrs. Emerson. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Jen and all of you, welcome. And I have to echo my colleague's comments about disappointment in zeroing out research projects, and I will just leave it at that.

Mr. Chairman, I do have a couple of questions I would like to submit for the record, please.

And unlike my colleague, Mr. LaHood, of course Southern Illinois University is right across the river from Cape Girardeau, where I come from, so I have lots of familiarity with it, and certainly am pleased that you are in this position, and hope that you will be able to come to Southeast Missouri sometime. Maybe you will have a school reunion.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM

Let me direct my questions to something that is real important to me, representing a rural area, probably the most rural area in our State, and that has to do with Agriculture in the Classroom. I want to know what your thoughts are regarding this program? Since primary and secondary education are really state-based, it does make sense for the Ag in the Classroom programs to be conducted by state-level organizations that better meet the particular requirements of each state. Can you explain how you assist state-based Ag in the Classroom programs and also detail the financial support that USDA provides those programs?

Dr. Jen. Congressman Emerson, first of all, I appreciate the question, because having been a dean of a college of agriculture, that is a great concern, of the pipeline support bringing students into the college. And I think it has to come from the elementary schools and secondary schools. And Ag in the Classroom is a wonderful program, and it is being supported, I think, as strongly as we are able to through the CSREES, but I would like Dr. Hefferan probably to give more details.

Mrs. Emerson. Okay.

Dr. Hefferan. The Ag in the Classroom program is supported through a network of volunteer teachers across each state, with a great deal of support from State Departments of Education, the Farm Bureau and other organizations interested in Ag literacy.

What we have tried to do in the last couple of years with the Ag in the Classroom program is to use some of the increased resources for that program to set up a national website, which we have done through a cooperative arrangement with teachers in Utah. We also have worked with NASA to collaborate on some programs that really pique the interest of young children in science, and talk about the inter-relationships of agricultural science with all other areas of science, and that has been a very productive program. We have also worked Government-wide in issues related to the localization of science and the challenges that brings for agriculture.

We work primarily with the Ag in the Classroom network that we coordinate and use our funds to manage that network, but we also have supported several other groups to develop curricula that can be used as models. It is a small program, where we really feel like the Federal role is catalytic rather than managing, and I can tell you, it is a remarkable thing what effort the teachers across the country put into this program. I have attended their annual meeting, and the creativity of these teachers is amazing.

Students really learn a great deal about science by understanding agriculture, and particularly young children are interested in food and in grass and how things grow, and they make remarkable examples.

I will take 30 seconds to tell you the best little project they started this year in Ag in the Classroom, and it involves taking a potato and slicing it into the number of pieces there are students in the classroom, passing the potato around the room and putting several slices into a Ziploc bag. Then they have the children go out of the room, wash their hands, cut up another potato, pass it around the room, and put the slices in a Ziploc bag. They teach more about food safety and microbiology by looking at those bags a week later, where there are a couple of pieces of potato in one bag, and a black liquid in the other.

Those are the kinds of creative things teachers do in Ag in the Classroom.

Mrs. Emerson. I am familiar with those, and I think it is a tremendous idea. But let me ask you, what kind of benchmarks do you use to really measure success, or is it possible to do that?

Dr. Hefferan. Well, the benchmarks are very much related to the state standards of learning, making sure that the curricula that are developed and implemented can be used across a whole range of subject matters. We do go in and do an evaluation particularly of the curricula that are developed and shared at a national basis, but that evaluation is based not only on the use of the curricula but the relationship of the curricula to the local standards that must be set. So while there is an overall effort to analyze the program, the evaluation factors are very locally determined.

Mrs. Emerson. Okay. I appreciate that. Thank you.

KNOWLEDGE OF AGRICULTURE

Ms. Kaptur. Would the gentlelady yield just for a second?

Mrs. Emerson. Yes.

Ms. Kaptur. I am extremely interested in your line of questioning, and you mentioned you represent a largely rural area, the most rural in Missouri. I represent both an urban area and a rural area, and not the largest rural area in Ohio. In the urban area I have been disturbed for a long time about the divorce of our youth from nature and from an understanding of nature. And a few years ago, in the rural area we had problems with inspiring young people to go into the field of agriculture in so many of its dimensions. NRCS, through a private contract I guess, produced this book that I am just fascinated with, ``Food, Land and People.'' It comes in a big binder, and the only reason I am injecting after your time is to say that I do not know how you make that available across our country, but many of our 4-H chapters work in urban areas as well as urban areas, I think those lesson plans are the finest I have ever seen. And they connect whether you are in an urban classroom or in a rural setting. And I would just urge the Department to do what you can to make that available to a broader range of students through every program you have, students and teachers.

So I apologize to the gentlelady for taking a few moments here, but I am with you on this one.

Mrs. Emerson. And I appreciate that too, but as you know, it is rather shocking, to be honest with you, how many people and students who live in rural areas do not have a clue either. That is very frustrating and frightening, as well. So we have our work cut out for us on all fronts in my opinion.

Dr. Hefferan. Well, let me assure all of you that we also contributed to the development of those curricula materials, and they are one of the primary sources of information used not only by the Ag in the Classroom program, but also by the 4-H program for teaching about agriculture in the context of environmental concern.

Ms. Kaptur. Doctor, is that up on the Web?

Dr. Hefferan. The Food, Land and People program is a private program, and they do not have a web-based program, but you can access almost all of those materials through our website at wwwreeusda.gov.

Mrs. Emerson. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Ms. Emerson.

Ms. DeLauro.

Ms. DeLauro. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And welcome and thank you all for being here.

I have three questions and others I will put into the record, so I will try to be succinct. The first one has to do with an economic study of a single food agency. According to your testimony, the second goal of the Economic Research Service is that food production system is safe and secure, and it is further stated that research helps Government officials design more efficient and cost-effective approaches for promoting food safety.

SINGLE FOOD AGENCY

I introduced, along with some others last year, the Safe Food Act, which is legislation that would create a single consolidated Food Safety Administration. And my two questions related to this are: Has ERS done an economic study of creating a single food agency? If so, what were the results? And secondly, if not, would ERS do such a study?

Mr. Jen. Dr. Offutt, I think this is directed to you.

Dr. Offutt. Thank you. No, we have not done a study of the economic cost of the implementation of a single food agency. Our focus is on the initiatives that a single food agency would undertake, not whatever efficiencies might be gained by consolidating the bureaucracy. We really probably do not have the expertise to make that assessment. We look at questions about what regulatory regimes actually produce safer food by direct action in the field.

So certainly if Congress directed us to do such a study, we would, although I have to tell you that our ability to take that on as economists is probably limited because many of the questions of efficiency do not run strictly on cost or savings, as in typewriter purchases. It is more of a political science question.

Ms. DeLauro. I also think it may be, but maybe we can have someone come in and do a study to find out whether or not it is more efficient for us to deal with one agency responsible for food safety, rather than 12 different pieces of it.

My question was, would you? If you do not want to do it, would you be willing to have someone else do it?

Dr. Offutt. Well, in fact, the National Academy of Science has done a number of studies that go to the question of the organization of the Federal Government with respect to the delivery of safety programs. So our starting point would be to familiarize you with the results of their findings, and see what else might be required.

Ms. DeLauro. Well, that is what I asked. My first question was, have there been any studies? If there are, we would loveto get the benefit of that. And then secondly, what I will try to do is to pursue the effort to try to do an economic study to see in fact what is cost efficient, what allows us to get where we need to go on the issue of food safety, and to try not to be duplicating efforts in what those efficiencies are.

So I would appreciate that, and any thoughts that you have on how you might, or you in conjunction with others, might do some sort of an economic study that would allow us to look at this issue.

A second question has to do with the agriculture biotechnology cooperative arrangements. In the field of agriculture biotechnology, how much research, as a percentage of USDA's total research, and in dollars, does USDA do with private industry? How much of this is done with large companies or with small companies? Is this all in the form of grants? Are there any cooperative arrangements? Who retains the title to any inventions? What is the rate of return, if any, and does the USDA receive any profits made on inventions developed with USDA funds?

Dr. Jen. At this moment I do not have this information right off----

Ms. DeLauro. If you can get me that information, that would be terrific.

Dr. Jen. Yes. We will be happy to send you a report to answer that question.

FOOD SAFETY RESEARCH FUNDING

Ms. DeLauro. Wonderful, okay. I think we are all concerned about the issue of food safety. I know all of you are. It certainly is a subject of interest of this committee, and just personally I have taken an interest in that area. And the research at CSREES shows that funding has essentially stayed the same at $15 million since fiscal year 2001. What is the total budget for food safety research at USDA? How does the Department deal with the funds? What does CSREES do with their food safety budget, and does the agency need more funding, especially since there has not been an increase since 2001? And again, prior to September 11th, certainly post September 11th, there is more concern in this area.

Dr. Jen. I think I would like both Dr. Knipling and Dr. Hefferan, because I think ARS does spend quite a bit of research funding in food safety. I think it is over $100 million a year.

Dr. Knipling. Yes. ARS has a very significant program in food safety research. It is on the order of about 10 percent of our total program nationwide, which amounts to about $92.3 million, and that has grown dramatically over the last 3 or 4 years. I would say it essentially doubled over the last 5 years. As you point out, there were no significant increases for this fiscal year and none proposed for the next. But nevertheless, it represents a tremendous growth in the program.

There are 3 or 4 categories of that research. The bulk of it is in microbiological food safety with respect to meat and poultry and even some vegetable crops. Then we also have fungal toxins, aflatoxin, mycotoxins. We are also concerned with chemical aspects of food safety and chemical residues. Those would be the main categories of our food safety research program.

FOOD SAFETY

Dr. Hefferan. Let me say that the $15 million that you cite is for a specific program, which is under the Section 406 authority for Integrated Research, Education, and Extension activities, and that program was increased to $15 million two years ago and has been funded at that level.

But in addition to that we have spent in excess of $21 million of the National Research Initiative funding on food safety research primarily focused on biological contamination issues, and spanning both meat products as well as other food products.

In addition, we have worked collaboratively with the Food and Drug Administration on a number of projects that look at microbial contamination of fresh fruits and vegetables, and have both helped develop some best management practices and done training across the country to help farmers utilize these practices.

So our total expenditure for food safety research is more in the range of $40 million a year rather than $15 million.

Ms. DeLauro. So you are at about 90, you are at about 40. Are there any other areas at USDA where there is research in this area? I just want to try to see what the total----

Dr. Offutt. The food safety work we do is so intertwined with a lot of the work on consumer behavior, it is hard to say. I will guess on a number. Probably between $5 and $7 million, which is a very large portion of our $60, $70 million. We focus on understanding the cost to society from people getting ill from foodborne pathogens. We look at how we can change people's behavior, for example, how we can make them cook their hamburgers to a more well-done degree. So that is the kind of thing we do.

Ms. DeLauro. So you are at about 4 or 5. Again, is that the total range of food safety? I just want to try to get to a sense of what we are overall spending at USDA for food safety research.

Dr. Jen. Right. I think we can probably provide you later with the breakdown.

Ms. DeLauro. That is fine.

Dr. Jen. And also because we are only answering for REE. You know, there are other agencies within USDA that also probably spend funding relating to it.

Mr. Dewhurst. We do what we call a cross-cut analysis of the Department analysis in food safety, and I would be glad to make that available to you and to the committee. We can show you everything from meat and poultry inspection to the research.

Ms. DeLauro. Absolutely, that would be terrific. I appreciate that.

[The information follows:]

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

Dr. Knipling. If I could add one point, also. We classify our research in one category or another, but there is other research that is relevant to food safety. I am now referring to some of the animal health issues that we talked about earlier. Waste management, environmental quality and other research activities, also impact food safety, but we don't categorize the work as such.

Ms. DeLauro. Well, again, as I say, I think it would be enormously helpful to get the overall picture. It sounds to me like we have a substantial commitment. If that is the case, that is terrific, but let's just try to take a look at what we do have, and be able to ask some questions from there. That would be very, very helpful.

Do I still have any time, Mr. Chairman, or is all gone?

Mr. Goode [presiding] That is it.

Ms. DeLauro. That is it. Thank you very, very much, Mr. Chairman. I will submit the other pieces for the record.

Mr. Goode. Next is my turn for questions, but I am going to delay them until the end, and go right to Ms. Kaptur.

Ms. Kaptur. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much. I appreciate that.

USDA RESEARCH FUNDING

Dr. Jen and Dr. Hefferan, Dr. Knipling, Dr. Offutt, I have been sitting and listening to you, and all I am thinking up here is you do not have enough money for what you need to do, and your strength is your incredible partnerships across the country with our landgrants and through your own labs. Your weakness is that you do not have an image that captures the fancy of Congress, and so that is why you do not win in the research fight. We have to figure out how to do that. And I want to think together with you on this.

If I look at the increase, just the increase that NIH is requesting this year, it is 1\1/2\ times your entire budget. It is 150 percent of the total USDA research budget, just their increase, and $27.2 billion is the total amount that they are requesting. Now, I vote for that, and I was one of the members that supported the NSF increases.

So let me tell you, something like the Human Genome Project, it captured the fancy of Congress. The brain mapping over a 10-year period captured the fancy of Congress. I know that I am sitting here with at least, what, 90 percent of the genes that plants have, and that the fundamentals are in the plant sciences and in the animal sciences. What did they say that human beings have some percent of the genes of gnats. What is it? 97 percent?

So it is pretty clear what is going on here from a scientific standpoint.Yet you are not the ones in the driver's seat on the research front. I do not know what we are going to do about that this year, but we have got to do something. One of our problems is we are restricted here by the jurisdiction of our subcommittee and the big money is flowing to NSF, it is flowing to NIH.

What interests me, Dr. Jen, is your familiarity with the White House science advisor. The research battle has to be fought inside there, and USDA has to have a bigger chair at the table. As I look at the increases proposed for DOD, and you have a partnership with DOD; the increases proposed for NASA, you have a partnership with NASA, I really think you should give some hard thought to how to partner with them in a larger sense this year, because I think they are going to get some money. And so whether it is bioenergy projects that you are doing with DOE or DOD, or plant genetics research that you are doing, somehow you have got to get your numbers up, because essentially at flat line you are decreasing. You cannot hire good staff. You are going to lose your best people. And you also lose your image up here, because you do not look as exciting, even though I think you are the most exciting department in the Government of the United States, with what you do and its relevance to life on the planet. You do not get the attention you deserve.

So Think with me on this. I know you cannot give me an answer now, but somehow you need to have an image. That is why we want to have lunch with you. Let's talk about this a little bit and think about, hopefully, this year we can do better than the budget you have given us, but for the future you need an image and you do not have it, so at least that is this member's opinion. So I just wanted to put that on the record.

In terms of----

Dr. Jen. Could I probably give you just a very short answer on that?

Ms. Kaptur. Please, doctor. I did not want to put you on the spot, yes.

Dr. Jen. First of all, I would like to thank you very much for your advice, because I think it is right on target. It is exactly why I came to USDA and took this job. Secondly, I do want to say that we have made a small inroad in that OSTP has made USDA the leading coordinating agency for a new Domestic Animal Genome Inter-agency Work Group. So in some way we are saying that NIH is leading human genome; NS is leading plant genome, and USDA is leading animal genome. So we are slowly making progress--and I was very proud of that little accomplishment.

Ms. Kaptur. I will just place this on the record, and I do not want to run out of time here. But I had a medical school in my district say, ``Marcy, we need really clean swine because we want to use heart tissue for transplants into humans.'' And I thought, ``Oh, great. This is something we can work on with USDA.'' Then I come back here to Washington, ``Sorry, Marcy. USDA is not involved in animal research that goes into humans. That is HHS.'' I said, ``HHS knows nothing about swine.'' And I said, ``Isn't it interesting, the lines of science are blending.'' And we are a little bit rigid in the way that we deal with this from a scientific and research standpoint here at the national level. And so if you pursue the science, if you pursue what you know you have out there, help us to shape an image that really gives you the kind of lift that you need to get the research dollars that are so vital to our future.

FARMERS' SHARE OF THE FOOD DOLLAR

I wanted to move very quickly to, perhaps Dr. Offutt and Mr. Bosecker can give me this. In your testimony, Dr. Jen, you said the percent of the food dollars that consumers have to now spend is down to about 10 percent compared to 20 percent. What is the percent of the food dollar that goes into the pockets of productive farmers? If we look historically, do you have those numbers now, compare 30 yearsago, 20 years ago, 10 years ago, of what is spent by the consumer and also of the dollars that USDA spends on nutrition programs and various--two-thirds of our monies in nutrition programs of various kinds that goes into the pocket of farmers? Are you able to give us that information?

Dr. Offutt. Yes. Certainly, I will be happy to provide you with charts that will be perfectly accurate historically, but today, considering the food system as an aggregate, probably 10 to 15 percent of the consumer food dollar goes to production agriculture, and the remaining 80 to 85 percent is for packaging, people who work in restaurants, processing and the like.

[The Information follows:]

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

Ms. Kaptur. Well, this is a very interesting issue for me, and how we use the powers that exist to create income for the people in the field--in fact I had this brilliant idea the other day--maybe it is not so brilliant, probably a lot of people have had it before I did--but I am sitting out there in one of our food banks, looking at the fact that they are being drawn so heavily, and we are asking people to go to the retail stores and purchase all this food and then donate it to the Food Bank. And I thought this is crazy. We have got all these farmers around Northwest Ohio. Why could we not give them a little payment? A lot of them donate pumpkins, and they donate squash, and they donate cucumbers, and they donate tomatoes. And I am thinking, why do we not have a program where we give farmers some benefit if they donate directly to a food bank? Why did we not do this? Why do we say there is only one way to move that food dollar?

So I just put that on the table as an issue that any information you can provide me, both from the public purchases, the private purchases of food, how much of that goes into the farmer's pocket? And then looking at USDA programs in totality, what of that goes into the farmer's pocket from the nutrition side and from the agriculture side would be greatly appreciated.

Screw Worm Facility

I just wanted to ask for one piece of information, Dr. Jen. I know you will not have this, but your predecessor for several years was asked about a proposal to reposition the screw worm facility in Chiapas, and to make a proposal to us regarding how that facility could be used for other purposes to help the people of Mexico to gain some footing in an extremely complicated region of that country. We never got an answer back from USDA, and I am very disappointed in that.

It is not your responsibility, but you should be aware of that. And this is a part of Mexico our continent should care about, and USDA operated the only facility there. Granted it was for a very specific scientific purpose, but could we use it for tropical fruit production? Is there something else that could be done there? If someone could get back to me on that, it would be greatly appreciated.

Dr. Jen. I will check into that.

Ms. Kaptur. Thank you.

Mr. Bonilla [presiding]. Thank you, Ms. Kaptur.

Mr. Goode.

Mr. Goode. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I was looking at your proposal here and the zeroing out of so many research endeavors that this committee started, but global change got an increase. Tell me what global change has done this year and what you want it to do next year.

Mr. Jen. I think you are talking about mainly the ARS budget in global change. Dr. Knipling.

Global Change

Mr. Knipling. Well, global change, of course, relates to the issue of global warming, carbon dioxide emissions and so forth, and there is obviously a lot of uncertainty about that issue, yet there in concern around the world for regulation of emissions and the like. This Administration believes it is premature to regulate. We need more scientific information about that activity. Within the agricultural sector, we are studying quite a bit on the carbon dioxide relationships between the land and the plants and the animals and the atmosphere, and that is the primary thrust of our research.

Mr. Goode. Who are you contracting with and who is getting the money?

Dr. Knipling. We are conducting this work at our own in-house laboratories.

Mr. Goode. So this is a $2-1/2 million amount for USDA in house?

Dr. Knipling. Yes.

Mr. Goode. Where are you doing it?

Dr. Knipling. We have a network of laboratories, many of them in the western United States. Fort Collins, Colorado, Phoenix, Arizona, Temple, Texas, are some of the laboratories that come to mind at this point.

Mr. Goode. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Goode.

We will now continue our second round of questioning in the same order we proceeded earlier. Mr. Boyd.

Grapefruit Drug Interaction

Mr. Boyd. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And Dr. Jen, I want to ask a question which I think is of great importance to Texas, not only Texas citrus mutual and California citrus growers, but also our Florida citrus growers. That question has to do with what has become known as the grapefruit drug interaction problem. You may be familiar with this issue, or you may want Dr. Knipling to address this, but this obviously has caused a serious decline in grapefruit sales by our grapefruit producers. In Florida alone, our growers have invested a million dollars in research andeducation efforts to try to understand this issue a little better.

Can you talk to me a little bit about the Department's feeling on this and your willingness to get involved and do some research to help us find solutions? The reason I ask this question now is because in early January, Commissioner Charles Bronson, our Commissioner of Agriculture and the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Citrus, Bob Crawford, wrote the Secretary a letter addressing this issue and asking for assistance. If that letter has been responded to, I am not aware of it, but I would like to get your thoughts on this, and what the Department's role might be in helping us identify solutions to this problem, specifically identifying the gene that is causing this and how we deal with it.

Dr. Jen. I am aware of the specific thing that you are talking about, but not in great technical details. I think the major difficulties of tackling that type of perception or advertisement is because it involves food and drug interactions. And so I think we would need to work with FDA or other agencies to determine how we are going to address this issue. This really deals also, with the pharmaceutical industry, which we do not have a lot of contact with in terms of getting cooperation from them.

But, with that, Ed, do you have anything to add?

Dr. Knipling. I am really not that familiar with the issue, to tell the truth. To the extent it would involve an interaction with citrus genetics and genome, we could certainly play a collaborating role. Some of our program at the new Ft. Pierce laboratory is in fact focused on citrus genomics.

Mr. Boyd. So what I hear you saying is that you would be open to helping through your research facilities, and that there has been no position taken by the Department expressing a lack of interest, or stating a position that would say that we are not going to do any research there?

Dr. Jen. Not that I know of, sir.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Boyd. I would just like to note that I appreciate you bringing up this issue. This is important to a lot of citrus producers in Texas as well, and we will be working with you on this.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do have a copy of the Commissioner's letter if you would like to have it, and maybe we could get some response to them if it had not already been prepared.

Dr. Jen. I believe the response is in the mail.

Mr. Boyd. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Bonilla. Mr. Farr.

Mr. Farr. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have one comment and a question.

Moisture COntent

First is Virgil Goode's question about climate change. One of the things that I have heard from my farmers that they need most of is weather data on moisture content on plant leaves. And you might want to remember this and see if you can get the Department researchers to work with it. The Navy's Fleet Numerical Weather Station, which gathers all the weather in the world, is in Monterey, California. And next to it is the National Weather Bureau. They moved there because of the computer capacity and the information capacity that the Navy has.

They have offered, sort of as a good neighbor, to be able to do research with the farmers in Salinas Valley, and we have a lot of micro climates as you down the valley. But this is something that is very essential, and it is their number one priority issue for research, but it is beyond the capability of standard research universities to have the kind of weather gathering data that they have. So I would hope that you might look into that and then work with the Navy and the Weather Service with the farmers in Salinas.

My question goes to the issue of, I would be very interested in finding out how much research goes into our commodity programs and the crops that are grown in those commodity programs that we subsidize, and how much research goes into the agricultural products that are on the Department's nutritional list, that is, the things that we recommend that people eat, and certainly promoting our school lunch program as the 5-a-day. I would like to see what the contrast is between research for commodity and research for nutrition.

And also I want to thank you for your program in the National Research Initiative Competitiveness Grants programs to increase that, and it proposes increases for food safety, nutrition research and research targeted at small and mid-size farms and rural air quality. I think the rural air quality is one of the issues we talked about.

What is your definition of small and mid-size farms? Dr. Jen, you know California real estate and you know California agriculture, and oftentimes they are small, but their income and their expenses far exceed the definition of small or mid size. So is this land area, or is this income, or is this value, or are these fixed definitions?

Definition of Small and Medium Size Farms

Dr. Jen. Do we have a fixed definition for a small or medium size farm?

Dr. Offutt. Well, certainly there is no standard USDA definition of small and medium size. We have a farm topology that defines small farms as any with sales of $250,000 or less, but people running that program would have to say within that how they would actually identify small and medium size.

Mr. Farr. Well, I would hope that it is not our other standards that we use for small and medium in the Department, because you are going to keep a lot of small and medium size agriculture in California, and high productive value-added agriculture, expensive agriculture, out of the mix.

I am going to leave with the idea that I hope you see today that this committee are your cheerleaders. I mean we are--and we are concerned about research, and I think that the earmarks that the Department cut are not appropriate. But the reason the earmarks are in there is those are directions that at least the political will says we ought to be addressing, and the bureaucracy will, if you have, says, well, you know, they do not meet our criteria. The problem is you can create a bureaucracy industrial complex in agriculture and in agriculture research. And I think you have got to keep in mind that a lot of these issues, I mean we have our university research folks, you have your field stations, and those are essentially where the politics are for research, but there is other needs out there in society that do not get heard, and what they do is they come to us. And so we need to have a better balance of what we are trying to articulate as a priority, as a help for research and what you traditionally have done. And I think if we work thatway, I agree totally with Marcy, that if life on the planet is about what you eat, then we ought to be spending an awful lot more time in deciding through research what is good to eat and healthy to eat, and how we can combat diseases and develop a health world, not a healthy Nation.

Thank you for your work, and we look forward to working with you and increasing your budget, and you paying attention to our earmarks. Thank you. [Laughter.]

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Farr.

Dr. Jen, we have a vote on the house floor right now. I am going to go cast my vote and return. It will just be a couple of minutes, and if you would be patient with us, we would appreciate it.

[Recess.]

Mr. Nethercutt [presiding]. Ladies and gentlemen, good morning. The subcommittee is back in session after our vote. I am late getting here because I had other hearings, so I immediately get to be the Chairman for a few minutes. I want to thank you all for being here, and I understand I am one who has not asked questions, and everyone else has, so I will proceed if it is all right with the rest of the committee.

AGROTERRORISM

I want to ask about the issue of agroterrorism. My understanding is that there is about $5 million in the present budget for agroterrorism. I understand Ms. Kaptur has raised an issue about this. I have a special interest about agroterrorism because Washington State University is in my district, and we have legislation that we have introduced that would address the issue of extremist groups who want to burn down and destroy agriculture and biomedical research facilities.

So if you have answered it already, I apologize for asking the question again. Perhaps you could address that issue and then I will follow up.

Dr. Jen. Yes, I did answer that a little earlier I think. The Department formed a Homeland Security Council, led by the Deputy Secretary, Jim Moseley. And we are really dealing with this issue almost on a daily basis in that the whole Department is very much involved.

The number one issue that we actually dealt with is to try to secure particularly the high vulnerability research laboratories that we have. There are 6 or 7 of them, including Plum Island. We not only did the review ourselves in trying to secure physical facilities and things like that, but also engaged an outside consultant that specialized in security management, to keep us advised. And so we are beefing up physical securities on a daily basis. And I think the specific allocation of funding in there is in the research side to try to develop rapid detection methods for pathogens, in trying to find ways to control their spread and various different things.

Mr. Nethercutt. I appreciate that. I guess my question goes further, to the issue of preventing domestic terrorist groups from going into a research facility, which is the product of years and years of diligent research by well-meaning people with good motives to try to help humanity, going in and burning it down or tipping over the trays or research items and destroying the facilities.

Is your attention also being paid to the issue of hardening facilities that are just basic research facilities, maybe research stations out in the middle of a wheat field, but that contain very valuable research? Are you looking at that also?

Dr. Jen. Yes, we are looking at it. In fact, we have a consultant right now look at every single research facility ARS has in that regard. And also, I want to say that you are absolutely right. Our current experience shows that security of the physical facility is probably easier to establish. The hardest one is the access, the personnel access to the research facility, because of the fact that you have academic freedom and you have many people visiting labs. We are researching that specific issue.

Mr. Nethercutt. Did you make recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget which were in excess of the $5 million that has been allocated to agro-security in the present budget?

Dr. Jen. I do not believe so specifically for agroterrorism, no.

Mr. Nethercutt. Well, I guess it is really up to this subcommittee and other appropriate committees within the Congress to make judgments about the adequacy of the budget request. Certainly is it up to the Congress as a co-equal branch to make those judgments. And I know everyone in this subcommittee feels very seriously and strongly about the need for protection, not only in food safety, but Ag safety and research safety all across the board. So I know we will in due course be visiting this issue in this subcommittee.

Dr. Jen. Yes. I would like to add that in the fiscal year 2002 supplemental budget to the defense bill, the USDA received appropriations.

Mr. Dewhurst. $328 million was provided by the Congress, the vast majority of which will be used for the purposes that you are talking about. That is over and above what you see in the budget. Our Congress has been fairly generous. We have money. We just need to get the work done to shore up these laboratories.

FUNDING OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Mr. Nethercutt. I see my time has expired. I will ask a final question if I may. I know that every year it seems like the administration, previous administrations and this one, want to make the reductions in agriculture research, and at the same time we see increases in the National Science Foundation and NIH research funding. I am here to just tell you as a person who cares deeply about agriculture, as does every other person on this committee, we think Ag research is critically important to the future of the Nation as well, especially our national security as we look to food security in an uncertain future. So even though you cut out research stations, it has been the history of this committee to put them back in because they do darn good work, and we cannot lose these scientists who have the uncertainty of one year to the next of not knowing whether they will be funded or whether they will not be funded. That is not a good way, in my opinion, to establish long-term high-quality researchers across this country who will help our farmers and growers produce the best food supply in the world.

So I just say it advisedly that as one member, I am really very serious about making sure we have adequate agriculture research in this bill, and allow these good scientists to have some certainty about the future as it relates to their profession.

So with that, I thank you for being here, unless you have a comment?

Dr. Jen. No, I just want to thank you for your concern because we share it.

Mr. Nethercutt. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Ms. Kaptur.

Ms. Kaptur. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

And again, Dr. Jen, I just wanted to urge you to think about how to move the research agenda of USDA this year. I also serve on the Appropriations Committees for NSF and for NASA, and if some of those cooperative programs could be used to enhance what you are already doing, so you could move other dollars in your accounts, I would urge you to think about that and be back in touch with us, because I am disappointed in the overall level of the research dollars that you have presented us today.

BIOENERGY

Let me move to the issue of bioenergy. At least it is referenced in your testimony, and I sure do appreciate that since this is a real top priority for me. What concerns me is the amount of funds you have and I think my own lack of complete understanding of how the Department views its role in the use of biofuels and bioenergy for the future. I am wondering whether it would be possible for you to produce in letter form to this committee a description of how the Department at a policy level views its role in the promotion of research for bioenergy and ongoing activities in this regard, as well as your cooperative relationships with other agencies.

I read the President's energy report, and I think USDA is not even referenced. I think there is something on biofuels that is a footnote on page 92 or something. But I really need to know how the Department is thinking about biofuels and how you are arranging the expenditure of dollars. Was it 9 million additional dollars you are asking in this proposal; am I correct in that, and how that is going to be spent in furtherance of whatever program it is that you have set in place, but I cannot claim an understanding of this program, and it is something I care deeply about. And if I do not understand it, I would venture to say most members of Congress do not understand it, because this is something we follow pretty closely. So I would appreciate that.

If you wish to state anything for the record on your perspective on biofuels research and bioenergy research and production related to the Department, you certainly can do that now.

Dr. Jen. Yes. I will take the message back to the Secretary, because I cannot represent the Department. I can only represent just REE in the research part of it. And I think Ed Knipling can give you the research dollars we spend on bioresearch.

Dr. Knipling. Yes. This $9 million proposal relates to the Agricultural Research Service part of the budget. It is basically focused on biomass, crop related products that can be used for fuels rather than for food. So the program would be to enhance biomass production, the efficiency of the actual mass, and focus on the conversion processes to alcohol fuels. It would assess some oil crops for potential uses for biodiesel fuels.

There is a third component that relates to what we will call co-products. As we all may know the economic margin for alcohol and biodiesel fuels has always been problematic. If through the generation of processing and the conversion, some of the residues generate value-added products, we would increase the cost efficiency of the whole activity.

BIOFUEL RESEARCH

Ms. Kaptur. Well, I am very interested in the Department's overall perspective on this, and I have spoken with Secretary Veneman, and she is really very visionary in this regard. But we have not had any kind of clear statement from the Department on how it views it role in this arena.

Yesterday we had the undersecretary for conservation up here and I asked him about the vehicle fleet for the Forest Service, which is one of the largest in the Government of the United States, and to what extent they were using E-85 vehicles. There is not a consciousness, even within the Department, about how to use the power you have to help move this industry forward. And I think this year, because of Enduring Freedom, we have an enormous opportunity in cooperative efforts, research efforts that USDA can strike with DOD and with DOE that we have not had at other times. And I would really urge you to pursue that and not to wait too long to come back to us because in the appropriations process we can make certain things happen, and this Nation has limped along for far too long in not using our biofuels capacity.

It includes plant research in the most appropriate plants so that we can get the most BTUs out of those. It involves the processing side, as you have talked about. It may involve other products, value-added products that may flow from the process. We have plenty of ethanol plants up and operating around this country. I do not know to what extent USDA networks with them at all, but there are a lot of research projects that would be related to the reuse of some of the residues from those for animal feed and other things.

I just do not see the cohesive focus at USDA that would help me understand how to help you move not into the third ring, but into the center ring on this and helping America become fuel self-sufficient again.

So $9 million, just to put it in perspective, today our country, in terms of direct support of the petroleum industry, tax credits, support of our armed forces in Saudi Arabia and everything else, spends probably over $100 billion on the petroleum industry. So when you ask for $9 million, I just sort of say we are not even in the same game. And I am not asking you to ask for $100 billion, but that is the competition, and you should be aware of it.

If we were to convert all fields into America today, existing fields, not those in CRP, but existing fields into the production of fuels, we could probably serve 20 percent of the market, and our farmers are looking for new value added. So the Department really needs to take a leadership role and not be shy about this one.

SEED STOCKS

On the issue of seed stocks, we had asked the Department for a report that talks about the ownership of our seed stock, the location, the condition of those stocks. We had asked for a detailed report covering everything from seed storage, cataloging, maintenance, we have never received that. We asked for that in last year's report. If anyone wishes to comment or tell me when we might receive that, it would be greatly appreciated. I understand Fort Collins is our jewel, and I would like to know if that report is forthcoming, pease.

Dr. Knipling. That report has been drafted. The Agricultural Research Service is the lead agency. It is being reviewed by the Department. It should be here soon.

Ms. Kaptur. All right. Doctor, you think it would behere by May, before we are finished with the appropriations process?

Dr. Knipling. Yes.

Ms. Kaptur. All right. Thank you very much, and I will hold my remaining questions.

Mr. Bonilla [presiding]. Thank you.

Mr. Nethercutt.

BIOFUEL

Mr. Nethercutt. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a couple of quick follow-up questions to Ms. Kaptur's line of questioning.

I would commend you to a situation we have out in Ritzville, Washington, where a fellow has come in--I just met with him last week--talking about using soft white wheat as a fuel for a distillery to produce vodka and ethanol in eastern Washington. It is pretty exciting. The value added approach to production agriculture is something we ought to think very carefully about, and to the extent that research can be done to assist in that effort, I think it is advisable. Also making straw board out our way as a value-added product.

I think there are ways for entrepreneurship to prevail in the area of production agriculture, and meet fuel needs and alcohol needs for people who are inclined to drink vodka, and so we will add to the economy that way.

THE ROLE OF EXTENSION IN BIOSECURITY

I want to ask you as a follow up to the biosecurity issue, I am wondering what role you see for the extension services to play in rural communities to help farmers and ranchers prepare to address the biosecurity issue. Do you see a value there?

Dr. Jen. Sir, I think I see a great value there, because extension is probably one of the ready made networks of information flow that can rapidly get down to the local community level and have an impact. So we do think that it has a great role to play.

Mr. Nethercutt. Accepting that and agreeing with it, what plans are there in the budget and in the administration's plan to make sure that that is a reality?

Dr. Jen. I think Dr. Hefferan can probably say something.

Dr. Hefferan. Well, the extension system across the country is eager to participate and serve communities. I think there are two real advantages in extension, in meeting the challenge you have just stated. One is that they are a trusted source of agricultural and technical information in the community. And secondly, and probably more importantly, they are there for the long haul. Other groups come in when there is a problem, but then they leave, whereas the extension system is one of the tenants of the community.

There was established in the mid 1990s the Extension Disaster Education Network, the EDEN program, which was developed in response primarily to the natural disasters, the floods and hurricanes that we experienced in that era.

We have been working with the extension system to substantially expand that program to include both preparedness and responsiveness to manmade disasters, terrorism, introductions of pathogens, whatever it might be, into the system. And we have been working with the Department in part and talking about possibilities through the supplemental funding which are still being evolved. But there is a real commitment within the extension system and within our funding for the base program for extension to mobilize that expertise. It is a great opportunity to link extension to the rest of the Department and to the local resources.

Mr. Nethercutt. I think you are right, and there are good people in these extension offices who care deeply, are very dedicated to agriculture. Are the computer systems and the communication systems up to the task of having reliable and ready-made information for the real rural world that might be faced with a biosecurity problem?

Dr. Hefferan. Well, some of the systems are up to speed. The university systems are in and of themselves very strong. They need to be better connected to one another. I know you know Mike Tate in Washington State, and Mike and his colleagues have been leaders in helping to find exactly what the needs are.

I can say this is a case where the actual financial needs are not expansive. We are not talking about 10s and 20s of millions of dollars. We are probably talking about wrapping up the program, starting with the existing resources and redirecting some funds and expanding those programs at the State and the Federal level by linking them together, more than creating a lot of new things.

Mr. Nethercutt. Well, thank you very much for your testimony.

Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Nethercutt.

My understanding is Mr. Boyd has no further questions, so unless another member shows up, I will yield to Ms. Kaptur, and we will perhaps wind down.

SOFT WHEAT QUALITY RESEARCH

Ms. Kaptur. I wanted to mention the proposal in the budget to terminate the soft wheat quality research work that is being done at Wooster, Ohio. And my question really is, USDA tries to maintain research stations close to producers. Two-thirds of the soft red wheat grown in Ohio is milled in my district, and it serves companies like Nabisco. My question really is, what is the Department's reasoning on terminating this particular research station, this research capability? And where are these researchers going to be moving?

And if no one knows, then please submit this for the record or get back to us. And what budget savings does it provide to the Department?

Dr. Knipling. This proposal is part of the ARS budget, and it relates to this bigger issue of using some of the existing resources we have under a flat budget scenario to finance some of the other initiatives that we have been talking about earlier in the morning.

ARS operates 5 locations where we do similar work. In fact there are 4 wheat quality research laboratories. In addition to the one at Wooster, there is one at Fargo, North Dakota, Pullman, Washington, and Manhattan, Kansas, and then a fifth laboratory at Madison, Wisconsin, that deals with other cereal grains, barley and oats. But basically they have a similar function. And as you pointed out, they are geographically decentralized to be close to the industry and the plant scientists that use the results of those evaluations.

Under this scenario of flat budget, in order to finance some of the other proposed increases, the Department adopted the recommendation of the facility task force report that was earlier referenced, and proposes the closure and consolidation of these laboratories to two locations. So the issue is one of similar research activities, and we would propose to carry out these functions at Manhattan, Kansas on a nationalbasis to serve the entire wheat industry, along with Pullman, Washington.

Ms. Kaptur. So it would be both hard wheat and soft wheat?

Dr. Knipling. That is correct, yes.

Ms. Kaptur. Doctor, do you know the amount of that consolidation, what budget savings that provides, or could you provide it for the record?

Dr. Knipling. Yes. We can provide a detailed number. I would say the consolidation of the 5 laboratories into 2, would result in savings of about $1.2 million.

CSREES INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

Ms. Kaptur. Well, obviously, I am not too happy about that, so we are going to take a close look at this one.

I want to move on, if I could, to CSREES and the international programs that you may be involved in, if there is a way through extension or your regular other ongoing activities, that you could summarize for me how you look at your work in the international realm. Doctor, is there a way to do that simply here?

Dr. Hefferan. Our work with the universities and international programs has primarily focused on two things. One is helping nations who are seeking to establish an extension network, to do so. There are about 40 countries around the world that have expressed an interest in emulating the U.S. extension model. And in varying degrees we have helped universities and those countries extend that model.

The second is, and one where we are seeking an appropriation next year of a million dollars, is to help internationalize the curriculum in agriculture so that our students are better prepared for the real jobs they are going to be facing when they enter agricultural careers. And so that focuses on things like promoting international opportunities in exchange for students and faculty in collaboration with, particularly in that case, developed countries, where there is a lot to be learned of mutual benefit.

U.S. AID FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

We do now work extensively with funding from USAID that is managed through our agency to the universities and--

Ms. Kaptur. May I ask, doctor, how that comes to you? Is that through a set aside, or how do you do that?

Dr. Hefferan. That comes to us as reimbursable agreement from USAID. The funds are transferred to our agency for administration for specific projects.

Ms. Kaptur. Are you doing more and more with them?

Dr. Hefferan. It varies from year to year. The total level of funding has been relatively constant, and it has focused on some major projects. We have a very large project in Armenia, for example, which has been funded now for 10 years. The universities, of course, directly receive funds from them for other projects that we also provide technical assistance for.

We have tried to emphasize that our international engagement is for domestic benefit as opposed to development, per se. So the USAID activities are designed to both help in developing other nations, but also improving our own systems here by exposing U.S. staff to the challenges and issues in other countries.

So it is a program that almost all of the universities and agriculture around the country have a strong interest and commitment to, and our activities have been to again, in a catalytic way, help them link with other organizations. We do have a request in our fiscal year 2003 budget for a million dollars to support particularly this undergraduate and graduate training programs.

Ms. Kaptur. I would appreciate from you, if you could, a letter that puts your international activities in a context for me.

Dr. Hefferan. Certainly.

AID AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Kaptur. So I am very vitally interested in this, and I have been consistently disappointed in AID's performance in the rural development and agricultural arena globally with the exception of very few countries. I have said this at other hearings, but when I asked AID how many people were in their employ or on contract, there were over 10,000 globally. And I said, how many of them know anything about rural life, agriculture, development in the rural economy. It was about 80. And I said, well, this is why we cannot get anything going in all these places where I visit where people teeter on the edge of starvation. Their function delivering food packets is really very, very important, but you do not go the next step then.

So I am very interested in exploring how to more fully engage USAID, whether it is by set aside or contract in agricultural work around the world, and I would be very interested in your experiences there. I am hearing what you are saying about this year's budget, but from the standpoint of the United States, beyond agriculture, peace is our goal. And what I have seen built in the way of friendships between farmers in my state and university people flung all across the world is absolutely priceless.

And as we look at Afghanistan, for example, I have no confidence in AID to do it right. I have every confidence in USDA to do it right on contract to AID, because we can connect to communities where people actually speak the language in this country, where they have some knowledge of Afghani life. Sometimes these AID people spend so much time away from the United States, they forget what it is like to live back here, and they do not have the connections that we do. Texas A&M could make real connections that will last a lifetime, for generations. The same is true with Ohio State.

So I am looking for ways to get USDA more centrally involved in this, and your letter could help me understand your current activities and----

Dr. Hefferan. We will be pleased to do that. We work very closely with the Foreign Ag Service and International Cooperation and Development staff there, and we will be glad to put together a summary of what we are doing.

My staff just tells me that this year we have $9 million of USAID money coming to the agency for specific projects.

[The information follows:]

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) designs, implements, and evaluates extension/outreach, teaching and research partnership projects overseas. The U.S. land-grant colleges and universities are key collaborators in our international work because they provide much of the technical expertise needed on our projects. The International Science and Education Competitive Grants program will provide support to American colleges and universities as they train the next generation of agriculturalists to be globally competent and competitive. It has been designed in consultation with faculty and staff of many colleges and universities around the country.

Current CSREES international research and extension activities include projects funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in Armenia, Nigeria and Ghana. USAID provides funds to CSREES through reimbursable agreements. The Hurricane Mitch reconstruction program in Central America was recently completed. A brief description of these programs follows.

In Armenia, we continue to work with the Armenian Ministry of Food and Agriculture and newly privatized farmers to enhance production, processing and marketing capabilities. We are managing an agriculture marketing assistance project to help private entrepreneurs sell high-value horticultural and livestock products. At the same time, we are tapping the expertise of staff from several U.S. colleges and universities to develop the Armenian Extension Service's ability to meet the needs of clientele at the local level. In collaboration with Texas A&M University, we are assisting the Armenian Agricultural Academy to improve its applied research, marketing and outreach curriculum. We work closely with U.S. Historically Black Colleges and Universities to provide training to Armenia for improvement of goat production.

In Ghana, CSREES is working within the bilateral agreement of cooperation between USDA and the Republic of Ghana's Ministry of Agriculture on several training projects funded by USAID. Training topics were identified at meetings in Ghana last year that CSREES sponsored with representatives of the Ministry, Ghanaian agricultural universities and other leaders of Ghanaian agriculture. CSREES is also using USAID funds through the Africa Trade and Investment Policy to assist in the formation of U.S.-style farmer cooperative organizations in Ghana.

CSREES is using USAID funding to implement the Agribusiness/Extension Development project in Nigeria. Agriculture accounts for an estimated 38 percent of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product, and is viewed as key to the country's prospects. CSREES, with help from land-grant university trainers, is providing a series of train-the-trainer workshops in marketing, post-harvest handling, food preservation and storage, extension information dissemination, farm management, and business plan development. The first workshop was held in mid-2001. Between 50 and 100 Nigerian extension officers were trained, and subsequently trained 100-300 other agents.

Hurricane Mitch swept through Central America in late 1998, severely damaging the agricultural sectors in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. With technical assistance from a number of land-grant universities CSREES has just completed a successful effort, funded by USAID, to provide assistance to small and medium producers in affected areas. Project emphases included watershed rehabilitation, food safety, agricultural extension, dairy safety and shrimp production. We are reviewing lessons learned form the Hurricane Mitch experience so that, if needed, we can provide this kind of recovery assistance efficiently and effectively in the future.

We are tracking USAID efforts in Afghanistan and elsewhere in Central Asia so that, in the likely event that our help is needed in agricultural reconstruction efforts, we are prepared to assist.

AGRICULTURAL EXHIBITS

Ms. Kaptur. Very quickly let me just summarize that one of my staff was just down at Epcot in Florida, looking at the exhibits there, including one that ARS is cooperatively working on with Epcot, with Disney World. And it deals with genetics, and it is a very exciting display. As we are building these new USDA facilities here in Washington, and we are looking at the Smithsonian here in D.C., for a long time I have been concerned of the millions of visitors that come here a year, no one would ever go into Agriculture and the Plant Sciences because of the way it is presented.

And I would just encourage you, Dr. Jen, in your tenure, if you could take a look at what has happened in Florida. How did ARS manage to do that in Florida, yet it is not able to influence what happens here in the buildings in Washington as we build, and also at the Smithsonian to improve their exhibits? If you could make recommendations to thiscommittee on what might be able to be done, or go take the person from the Smithsonian out to lunch and talk about what is happening down there at Epcot Center. I really think we are missing a huge opportunity with all these kids that come through here every year that we could influence. And there are some good examples down there in Florida.

PLATE WASTE

Two final items. One is on plate waste and the report that we had asked for regarding how much food is thrown away across this country by our children in these school programs. And I have to say this is such a priority for me based on what I know, I was exceedingly disappointed in this report. It is based on data that is over 10 years old. Its recommendations are very weak. And my question really would be--and you don't have to answer it now--what would it take to produce a real report on what is happening to food programs across this country, what we need to do in order to minimize food waste and to get our youth conscious of where food comes from and how they are partners in feeding the world. I really think that USDA has a much broader role here than it imagines. And we have problems down there in the schools. They range from losing food as a value and throwing it out, poor nutrition, and then on the other side, obesity.

One of the recommendations in here is to have recess before lunch. I do not quite know how that fits. I guess if they exercise more, they will eat more, and they will not waste as much on the plate. But we have a problem down there in the schools.

And all these are connected. There is no more important function we have than to feed our children and to do it properly. So my question to you really is how do I get a report, what is it going to cost, that gives us workable recommendations? I know you cannot answer that right now, but I would appreciate it for the record.

[The information follows:]

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

It is important to improve program efficiency by reducing plate waste in the School Lunch Program as much as possible without compromising nutrition benefits of the program. To the extent that plate waste indicates a loss of nutrition benefits, particularly from foods such as fruits and vegetables that are underconsumed by American children, reducing plate waste may also enhance program effectiveness. USDA's School Nutrition and Dietary Assessment Study (SNDA-I) collected detailed, integrated information on school meal program effectiveness. That study took approximately 3 years to design and complete and cost about $2 million. A strengthened study completed today would probably cost in the range of $4 million to $5 million. The Economic Research Service has interest in conducting such a study and is currently evaluating alternative study design and data collection strategies. An expanded study would provide useful information on foods offered, consumed, and wasted, stratified by operational factors hypothesized to affect quality, effectiveness, and efficiency.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Ms. Kaptur. And finally, on the proposals that the Economic Research Service is making to do additional studies on invasive species, and the real cost to our economy of what this is all about. I hope that when you make recommendations to us in that regard, you will consult with organizations like the World Law Institute, which is based here in Washington, because the cost of citrus canker or the cost of Asian longhorn beetle are now being placed on the public sector, the public taxpayer of this country. Meat inspection in Mexico. We can go across the board.

There is a whole range of issues here relating to really the underbelly of the third world, coming here, affecting our food safety, the system that we use every day. And some of the recommendations will have to deal with world law, and many of the trade agreements we are locked in, and ways in which we can impose torts internationally and responsibility for the damage that is being done.

Mr. Boyd comes in here every year, and I think we are over a billion dollars now in terms of a cost to try to remediate citrus canker, which did not start in the United States. The same will be true with Asian longhorn beetle. That is coming out of the budget that should be paying for research, and those funds are being limited every year because of this rising cost within the agency for remediation, and the laws of the world. We cannot get at it.

We cannot place blame in the normal tort system that we are used to operating in this country.

So I just wanted to say that to you in hopes that the study you construct and the way that you proceed will be broad enough and perhaps the recommendations will range beyond the narrow jurisdiction of this subcommittee, but it is just absolutely a staggering issue. I am very pleased to know that you are going to be looking into it.

And I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your forbearance.

Agricultural Education

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Ms. Kaptur, and I would just like to note that I associate myself with your concern that the young people in this country are not as exposed to some of the great research that is being done. I think it is a very good point that you bring up, and I wanted to acknowledge that.

Mr. Farr has joined us. I believe he has a couple of remaining questions. Mr. Farr.

Mr. Farr. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Invasive Species

Two questions. One follow up on Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur's question on the ERS research that is going to be done on invasive species. Could you describe for us what you are going to undertake? It is a huge issue. In California, as you know, we have always had it because of so many people coming from all over the world and landing in Los Angeles or San Francisco International Airports. And we also have the very big commercial port in Long Beach.

How is this work going to be done to monitor invasive species that are coming through our trade agreement?

Dr. Jen. Well, I will let Dr. Offutt give you the detail, but I think generally speaking, what we do and is try to prevent it from getting in, and for example, ARS does have some biocontrol labs in foreign countries. So I think with work will look into the cost of border control versus preventive coming from our side and the various different----

Mr. Farr. I mean is it more technology based now? I know we have done some Med fly labs in other countries and thins like that. Is it an increase in that, or is more on appropriate technology like the methyl bromide fumigation that the countries require us to do and we require them to do?

Dr. Offutt. No. We will not consider ourselves the designer of new technology or detection methodology. What we are going to try to devise is a strategy that minimizes the cost of effective protection, try to determine, because pests and disease vary in their origin, the way they enter the U.S., the nature of their impact, how best to use resources of the Federal Government; or in fact create incentives for the private sector to behave differently.

I think of this as diseases plants and animals do not get here on their own. Somebody brings them in. So we need to understand what motivates that transmission.

Mr. Farr. The follow up of that, I mean here we are promoting, and the Department's been big in being part of the promoter of these trade agreements that the administration has brought forward. Is there going to be feedback that if we find our trade agreements producing commodities that have or products that have high risk invasive species, that we can----

Dr. Jen. We are actually quite aware of that. That is why we are asking for more funding in this area of prevention of animal disease and plant pests, and also that is the number one priority for increasing the NRI.

Mr. Farr. Are they giving it to you? I mean, we are--you know, I never thought about that before, but when we go out and vote for these trade bills, and the follow up for the administration, you think of that money going to commerce, not to USDA, and yet USDA ought to be getting a percentage of the benefit of this trade, what we are going to commit to it.

Dr. Offutt. We have a memorandum of understanding in the works with APHIS, so we will consider the activities that APHIS undertakes in countries where they believe the disease originates. That is governed by protocols for making that risk assessment under WTO agreement. So, yes, that is within the scope of what we would consider.

Mr. Farr. Could you give our committee a list of the high-risk areas that have come up with WTO agreements?

Dr. Offutt. We would be able to tell you a little bit about the entry of disease and pests just as a consequence of foreign trade, but what part of that would have been motivated specifically by the WTO, we probably would not be able to tell you, but certainly we can talk to APHIS about it.

Mr. Farr. But there isn't there a correlation between new trade agreements and commodities that will be coming in under those agreements or products that will be coming under those agreements and the fact that those countries host exotics or host invasive species?

Dr. Offutt. Possibly. I can't think of an example offhand, but, yes, we will certainly look at that.

Mr. Farr. If there is a correlation, I would be interested.

Dr. Offutt. Okay.

Methyl Bromide

Mr. Farr. Now I have another question. I mentioned a moment ago about methyl bromide, and I am very concerned that the original research, which ironically--I mean I do not think the building trades came in here and lobbied for that money, but the benefit for all of the USDA's research went into structural rather than field research. As you know, there is a drop-dead deadline on phasing out methyl bromide as an ozone depleter, and that was agreed to in international agreements many years ago, before any of us were on board. Since then the technology of application of methyl bromide injection into the soil has greatly improved and monitoring of it has been improved. Now there is a discussion that if indeed you can apply methyl bromide without escape, without atmospheric contamination, why not just allow it to be used, insist it be used safely? If it is not being an ozone depleter because it is not getting into the air.

Is there any research that you know, or are you addressing this issue of how the atmospherics of application can be contained? I think this is really important to the strawberry industry all over the United States, and a lot of the other industries that require--I mean nursery stock is requiring methyl bromide treatment in the soil. Dr. Jen, I know you are familiar with these issues. But what I have not seen before--we have just been looking to alternatives, not to essentially safe management or best management practices, that might in the end reach the same goals that elimination of methyl bromide is trying to achieve. A different approach, but it is one that requires some applied science.

Dr. Jen. Yes, I think you are absolutely right. After all these years of research we really could not find another silver bullet to replace methyl bromide with the same degree of effectiveness, the ease of application, the cost and various different things. But I do think that ARS research did look into the pest management, including the application side of it.

Mr. Farr. Well, we asked the Secretary when she was here a few weeks ago, and the indication was that they were not aware of the fact that anybody was dealing with the--I am trying to think of the word; I am using atmospheric, sort of the air quality issues, of being able to apply it without having it be a depleter.

Dr. Knipling. ARS is doing some work that I think is relevant to the question you raise. Certainly, we are not involved in the atmospheric chemistry of ozone depletion, but we are working on alternatives. Based upon some of the scientific data that we have developed over the years, that contributed to the extension of the ban from 2001 to 2005, and that bought some additional time. But I think probably the term you were looking for is recapture.

Mr. Farr. Well, it is barrier or recapture, yes.

Dr. Knipling. As part of our research on alternatives, we have been also looking at how to use it more effectively and safely, and in fact we have developed some recapture technology, if you will.

Methyl bromide is used as a fumigation, not only for the soil in a pre-plant, pre-production aspect, but much of it is also used for the fumigation of commodities that are destined for export to ensure that they are pest free.

Mr. Farr. But I understood that in the phase-out that that was not included. You could still use it for the chamber treatment, but not for the soil treatment.

Dr. Knipling. The phase-out actually, I believe, applies to both, but there are some allowances for exceptions, for so-called quarantine use. That is the treatment of the commodities. Or for other critical use exemptions yet to be defined.

Mr. Farr. Well, the same science that created that exception, if we could create good technologies on barrier and recapture, I mean if it works in chambers where it is controlled, and we can develop it by controlling it in the field, we ought to be looking at that, and we ought to be starting to promote it internationally, and not just use methyl bromide as we have said that we are going to do--I mean I am against methyl bromide as an ozone depleter, but I am for methyl bromide as an effective tool.

Dr. Knipling. Decontaminant, yes. Actually, some of this recapture work that we have done shows that we can recapture up to 99 percent, especially on commodity fumigation. That is where we are working in a chamber, so we can put it in and take it out. The soil is more problematic, but even then, methyl bromide is applied under tarps, and before the tarps are taken off, we can actually withdraw the excess and so recapture a lot of it also.

So this data I think would be very helpful to regulatory officials on an international scale who would make some of these decisions.

Mr. Farr. Are you pushing that?

Dr. Knipling. We are reporting it in our scientific literature, in our reports. We have an international methyl bromide conference every year. It often alternates between California and Florida, and this data has been reported.

We publish a methyl bromide newsletter. I think we have called this committee's attention to it before, and actually one of our recent issues addresses this recapture technology.

Mr. Farr. I have never seen that newsletter. Could I be put on your mailing list?

Dr. Knipling. Yes, certainly.

Mr. Farr. I will give you a lot of other names.

Dr. Knipling. I think it does have quite a bit of wide distribution among the industry that is concerned with this, and many of these people also interact with us.

Mr. Farr. I am finished on this, but you have got to get this information to the growers. It is going to the researchers, but the researchers are not talking to the growers, and that is why Congress mandated that this field work had to be done in the fields alongside people that are actually applying methyl bromide in the fields and can use the developing technologies to be better at it.

And I thank you.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Mr. Farr.

Thank you, Dr. Jen, and ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being with us today. You help us a lot by providing us information, and we look forward to working with you as we put this bill together this year. Please rest assured, we will be looking after your priorities, but we sure hope you look after ours as well.

Dr. Jen. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. The subcommittee will stand adjourned.

[GRAPHIC(S) NOT AVAILABLE IN TIFF FORMAT]

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2003

Thursday, February 28, 2002.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS

WITNESSES

JOSEPH J. JEN, UNDER SECRETARY, RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS
ED KNIPLING, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
COLIEN HEFFERAN, ADMINISTRATOR, COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE
SUSAN OFFUTT, ADMINISTRATOR, ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE
R. RONALD BOSECKER, ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
STEPHEN B. DEWHURST, BUDGET OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Opening Remarks

Mr. Bonilla. The subcommittee will come to order this morning. Ms. Kaptur, I note, is already enjoying the goodie bag that is provided by ARS, many of the products that are a direct result of the research that is done by ARS. We appreciate the bag being provided this morning to every member. They are all sitting behind the dais here and we appreciate that.

Today we are delighted to have before us Dr. Joseph Jen, the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics. Dr. Jen, we are happy to have you here for the first time, and we welcome your testimony today as well as that of your associates who administer the four agencies that are under your purview.

But before we begin, I would like to recognize my colleague, Ms. Kaptur. She is trying to get around the goodie bag I think.

Ms. Kaptur. I just want to thank everyone from the Department for being here today, all those responsible for the research side of the equation. There could be no more pivotal part of the Department than those activities that you represent. You really represent the future. And so I look forward to your testimony, and we thank you for your service to our country, and really the people of the world.

Ray and I were talking when I walked in about some meetings that we had yesterday with representatives from the Nation of Lebanon. And we spent the entire time talking about research and the future, and the challenges that that country faces with water use and with plant life. And I just kept thinking about the work that all of you do, largely unrecognized for the most part, and thank you so very much for being with us today.

Mr. Bonilla. Thank you, Ms. Kaptur.

Before we proceed, I would also like to acknowledge Mr. LaHood, who is here today. He is probably the best-known face on television of almost any member in the House, because he is always chosen to preside over the House floor during the very contentious debates we consistently have. So whether a bill is a campaign finance reform, or even a broadband bill that we debated on the floor yesterday, the Speaker calls on Mr. LaHood to do duty in the Speaker's chair. He spends long hours there, and sometimes has to make tough choices as to whether or not to be here or in the Speaker's chair. I wish we could clone you, Mr. LaHood so we could put you in two or three spots at once. We are proud of the work you do, and we missed you, but we welcome you back today.

Mr. LaHood. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bonilla. Mr. Jen, you may proceed with your opening statement. We have put your entire written statement into the record.

Mr. Jen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Congresswoman Kaptur.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it is my pleasure to appear before you for the first time to discuss the fiscal year 2003 budget for the Research, Education and Economics mission area agencies.

Introduction of Witnesses

I am accompanied by the administrators of the four mission area agencies, Dr. Ed Knipling, Acting Administrator of ARS; Dr. Colien Hefferan, Administrator of CSREES; Dr. Susan Offutt, Administrator of ERS; and Mr. Bosecker, Administrator of NASS. Also present is Mr. Steve Dewhurst, Director of the Budget Office of the Department. Each administrator has submitted written testimony for the record.

Opening Statement

Given today's tight budget constraints, driven significantly by the need to shore up our homeland security and current economic situations, the REE budget that we are discussing reflects a recognition of the critical role of our REE's research, education, economics and statistical programs in solving the problems facing our Nation's agriculture and food systems. We appreciate the support received from Congress in our appropriation for fiscal year 2002. The President's fiscal year 2003 budget proposes $2.3 billion for the four REE agencies.

REE's four agencies have a proud history over many decades of finding solutions to the challenges confronting farmers, ranchers and consumers. The work of these agencies has resulted in a high return on Federal investment, thus enabling our Nation to enjoy a plentiful, affordable and safe food supply. For more than 100 years science has been the foundation of American agriculture. During the past century research investment and scientific advances have fueled the tremendous rate of productivity growth in the American agriculture sector. America's public investment in agricultural research is a major reason the percentage of household income we spend on food has dropped from 20.5 percent in 1950 to 10.2 percent in the year of 2000.

However, without continued gains in agricultural science, the United States cannot continue to provide affordable, safe and nutritious food to American consumers and the world population. Without continued scientific progress, we also cannot continue to compete effectively in a global marketplace, nor can we develop practices that mitigate the effects of agriculture on the environment.

The remarkable success enjoyed by the agriculture sector and food systems, and the resultant benefits that have accrued to the Nation depend heavily on our having a reservoir of scientific knowledge. That reservoir is filled through conducting basic fundamental research. Applied mission-oriented research and technology development then

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